

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Hugh Weathers, Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 15, 2011

Weathers Calls for Specialty Crop Grants Applications

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Hugh E. Weathers, South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, announces a grant program for institutions and groups that support specialty crops. This program is funded by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service as established by the 2008 Farm Bill. Those interested in participating in the program are encouraged to visit the SCDA website, www.agriculture.sc.gov, to obtain the grant information and application. The project must fall within the criteria listed below and must benefit groups of producers and not individuals.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, nursery crops (including floriculture). Projects should be developed to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry: Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; improving efficiency and reducing cost of distribution systems; assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors; investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes; enhancing food safety; developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; pest and disease control; development of organic and sustainable production practices; developing local and regional food systems, and improving food access in underserved communities.

Projects can be multi-year but should not exceed three years in duration. Funds cannot be used for capital expenditures such as buildings, equipment or land. Indirect costs cannot exceed ten percent.

Submit project proposals to the email address listed below by May 17, 2011. Proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word. Any proposals submitted in a PDF format will not be accepted for consideration. Notification of project eligibility will be sent by mail to each project administrator by June 24, 2011. Submit proposals to:

[Amy Howard London](#)

Marketing Specialist

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 11280

Columbia, SC 29211

803-734-2210

Contact:

Stephen Hudson, 803-734-0648

Becky Walton, 803-734-2182

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HUGH E. WEATHERS, COMMISSIONER

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

**ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS GROWN IN
SOUTH CAROLINA**

**South Carolina Department of Agriculture
Wade Hampton Building, 5th Floor
P.O. Box 11280
Columbia, SC 29211**

**(803) 734-2210
www.agriculture.sc.gov**

Application - Federal Fiscal Year 2011

Funded by:
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Program – Farm Bill

Background

The Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorizes the USDA to provide grants to the state departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of Specialty Crops. Each state will submit an application that is reviewed and approved by USDA AMS personnel. In an effort to reach specialty crop initiatives throughout the state, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture has established a competitive grant process for these funds. **SCDA will accept proposals for these funds through May 17, 2011.** Once all proposals are submitted to SCDA, each will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria listed at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp.

Application Requirements

- **DUNS Number:** All grantees are now required by USDA AMS to have a DUNS number. The Data Universal Numbering System is a system developed and regulated by Duns & Bradstreet that assigns a unique numeric identifier to a single business entity. This may be obtained online via this website: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or over the phone at 1-866-705-5711.
- **CCR Registration:** In addition to the DUNS number, all applicants must also be registered at the Federal Central Contractor Registration (CCR) site: www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx
- Should any awards in excess of \$25,000 given to a first tier sub-grantee with more than \$300,000 gross income in the previous tax year, the entity will be required to report all use of funds on www.fsr.gov, in accordance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-award Reporting System.
- Complete this form by either typing the information on the sheet provided or by completing the form in Microsoft Word by downloading this document from the website www.agriculture.sc.gov.
- **Applications will only be accepted in Microsoft Word. Any applications submitted in a PDF format will not be considered.**
- Applications should be electronically submitted to alondon@scda.sc.gov.
- All applications must be received by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, May 17, 2011 to be considered for this funding.

Definition of Specialty Crop

Specialty crops are defined by law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” Specialty crops are plants that are intensively cultivated.

Project administrators may wish to consider submitting grants that increase the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and disadvantaged farmers. Increasing competitiveness may include developing local and rural agricultural economies, and improving food access in underserved communities.

Special consideration will be given to projects that:

- Increase child and adult nutritional knowledge and consumption of specialty crops
- Improve efficiency and reduce costs of distribution systems
- Assist all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”
- Invest in specialty crop research, including organic research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes
- Enhance food safety
- Develop new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; pest and disease control
- Develop organic and sustainable production practices
- Develop local and rural agricultural economies, and improve access of fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved communities

Restrictions and Limitations on Grant Funds

Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.

Capital Expenditures means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in transit insurance, freight and installation may be included in, or excluded from the acquisition cost in accordance with the governmental unit's regular accounting practices.

Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of AMS.

General Purpose Equipment means equipment, which is not limited to research, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5000.00.

Evaluation Criteria

Approval of applications will be based, in part, upon the potential market opportunities and impact of specialty crop, technical merit, the significance to long term sustainability of SC agribusiness, and the ability and willingness of the project administrator to transfer knowledge gained from the project to all growers throughout the state.

The requests for funding will be reviewed by a panel of peers and presented to the Commissioner of Agriculture for final approval.

Instructions for Completing Application

Each proposal should include each of the following sections. Complete **ALL** information requested. Proposals that are incomplete and do not satisfy all the requirements are at risk of being disqualified and returned to the proposing organization without review.

Remember: All proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word. Any applications submitted in a PDF format will not be considered.

Anticipated Award Announcement and Award Dates

The project administrator for each proposal will be notified by June 24th, 2011, as to whether or not their project will move forward for consideration by the USDA AMS personnel as part of the SCDA State Plan. All communications will take place via email or letter.

I. Application for SCDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – FY 2011

Project Title	
Name of Organization	
Employer Identification Number	
Requested Start Date: 10/1/2011	Anticipated End Date: 9/30/2014
Requested Amount:	
	Applicant
Full Name	
Title	
Organization	
Telephone / Fax	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
DUNS Number	
CCR Registration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Check all applicable statements The following proposals will benefit the following groups:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Beginning Farmer. A group of individuals or an entity that has not operated a farm for more than 10 years and substantially participates as a group of operators.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Socially Disadvantaged Farmer. A farmer who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A "Socially Disadvantaged Group" is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> USDA Certified Organic Farmer. A farmer or grower that has complied with all regulations set forth by the USDA to be a registered Certified Organic farmer, and intends to continue an organically run farm.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Certified SC Grown Member. A farmer or grower that is a member of the Certified SC Grown program administered by the SCDA.</p>	
<p><u>Eligible Applicants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications will be accepted from agricultural associations, industry/producer groups, community based organizations, and members of academia that seek to improve the competitiveness of specialty crops in South Carolina. • Applications for grant funds must produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or an individual. <p><u>Non-Eligible Applicants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individuals. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. 	

II. Project Abstract

III: Project Purpose

IV. Potential Impact

V. Expected Measurable Outcomes:

GOAL:

PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

BENCHMARK:

TARGET:

VI. Work Plan

Project Activity	Who	Timeline (Month / Year)

VII. Budget Narrative

PERSONNEL

FRINGE BENEFITS

TRAVEL

SUPPLIES

CONTRACTUAL

OTHER

	Spec. Crop Funds
Personal Services	\$
Fringe Benefits	\$
Travel	\$
Supplies and Materials	\$
Contractual	\$
Other	\$
TOTAL COSTS:	\$

VIII. Project Oversight

IX. Project Commitment

SUBMISSION ATTACHMENTS

X. Biographical Sketches

Provide a resume or other description of each project manager's qualifications.

XI. Letters of Support

Attach letters providing evidence of support for the project.
